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Fall 2006

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Needs Analysis of 6th-9th Graders at an English Writing Camp: English Writing Proficiency and Needs on English Writing

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Kahng, Jimin. (2006). Needs analysis of 6th-9th graders at an English writing camp: English writing proficiency and needs on English writing. *English Teaching*, 61(3), 59-82.

This study is to analyze needs of the students and the teachers in English writing for the betterment of a one-week English writing camp program. The participants of the study were 94 students, who enrolled in the writing camp, and 10 English native teachers in the camp. Three goals of the current study are 1) to examine the camp students' level of English writing, 2) to analyze needs of the students and teachers of the camp, and, finally 3) to investigate the relationship between students' level of English writing and various learner factors. In order to examine the students' level of writing ability, an English writing test was designed on the basis of the 7th National Curriculum of Korea. The needs analysis survey for the students covered the current situation of studying English and English writing, perception of writing, preferred writing activities, etc. The teachers' survey contained questions on their background and opinions on the existing writing camp program. In the process of investigating the relationship between the writing level and learner factors, MANOVA and a stepwise multiple regression were performed. The results of the test and survey results of the students and the teachers are discussed along with the research implications for further study.

I. INTRODUCTION

With great political and economic support, now there are about 55 English Villages built and operated around the country. Especially in this election time, building English Villages has become even an essential election pledge for the candidates. As English Villages and English camp programs are getting more and more attention, not only is the number of camps increasing but different kinds of programs are being developed. However, those camp programs have not been fully researched yet; on the contrary, research is just starting.

Thus, the current study researched Y's English writing camp to analyze needs of the students and the teachers in English writing for the betterment of the English writing camp program. The English writing camp is an annually-held one-week camp program, focusing on process writing instructions. Though the results of the students' survey in previous years

indicate that the camp has been generally successful, a needs analysis was conducted to further customize the program. The current study has three goals: 1) to examine the camp students' level of English writing, 2) to analyze needs of the students and teachers of the camp, and, lastly, 3) to investigate the relationship between students' level of English writing and various learner factors demonstrated in the survey results. In order to achieve the goals, an English writing test, students' survey of their needs in English writing—i.e. problems, preferred method, and attitudes—and teachers' survey were administered.

In addition to the application of the results to the curriculum development, the study is significant in its attempt to evaluate elementary and middle school students' English writing ability, as it is hard to find a writing test to directly evaluate beginning EFL students' writing proficiency.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

1. Needs Analysis

It is a basic assumption that a sound educational program should be based on an analysis of learners' needs (Richards, 2001), which is also a fundamental principle underlying learner-centered programs (Brindley, 1989).

Since needs analysis was introduced into language teaching in the 1960s through ESP, there has been an ongoing dispute about the definition of the term. The first view was to define needs analysis as identification of the language that the students will have to use in real communication situations. On the other hand, the second view interpreted needs in terms of the needs of the learner as an individual in the learning situation, which considers affective and cognitive variables in learning, such as learners' attitudes, motivation, personality, expectations, awareness, etc. (Richards, 2001). To balance these two approaches, Brown (1995) suggests a more comprehensive definition of needs analysis, which refers to "the systematic collection and analysis of all subjective and objective information necessary to define and validate defensible curriculum purposes that satisfy the language learning requirements of students within the context of particular institutions that influence the learning and teaching situation (p. 36)." To elaborate further, objective needs are factual information about learners, including their use of language in real life, language proficiency, and language difficulties, while subjective needs entail cognitive and affective needs of learners in the learning situation (Brindley, 1989).

To perform a needs analysis there are systematic steps to follow: 1) making basic decisions about the analysis, 2) gathering information, and, finally, 3) using the information (Brown, 1995). In the process of making basic decisions about the needs analysis, one should consider who will be involved in the analysis, what kind of information should be collected, and on what philosophy and in what point of view the analysis will be performed.

Once the decisions are made, it is time to gather information based on the purpose of the needs analysis. In gathering target information, Rossett (1982, cited in Brown, 1995) categorized five types of questions to be considered: problems, priorities, abilities, attitudes, and solutions. The current study developed materials based on those five categories of questions. The detailed explanations about the questions will be covered in the materials section.

In the process of gathering information, there are a variety of procedures that can be adopted in performing needs analysis. Richards (2001) maintains that it is advisable to take a triangular approach, by which different sources of information are sought, as any one source of information seems to be incomplete. The types of procedures include questionnaires, self-ratings, interviews, meetings, observation, collecting learner language samples, task analysis, case studies, and so on.

After the information is gathered, the results of the procedures are summarized and analyzed according to the purpose of the needs analysis. Some of the possible ways the results of the needs analysis can be used are the following (Richards, 2001): providing the basis for the evaluation of an existing program or a component of a program, providing the basis for planning goals and objectives for a future program, assisting with developing tests and other assessment procedures, or helping with the selection of appropriate teaching methods in a program, etc. (p. 67). As the results of the needs analysis suggest, a needs analysis does not happen only once at the beginning of the course. A needs analysis can also be conducted after a course has begun to investigate learners' preferred methods of learning, learning materials, language content, etc, through surveys, group discussion, interviews, and learning contracts (Brindley, 1989).

In Korea there have been needs analyses conducted in a few fields regarding English education, the majority of which were ESP program development and evaluation (Seungbok Lee, 2004), i.e. English teacher training (Joo-Kyung Park, 2004; Seok-Yo Song & Sun Lee, 2004), language program for university students (Miller, 2001; Dong-Su Chong, & Hae-Dong Kim, 2001), and international conference communication (Hae-Jin Hwang, 2002; Hae-Jin Hwang, 2001). Another field of needs analysis is national curriculum development (Hong-Bae Lee, 1995; Jin-Hwang Choi, Kihwa Park, & Eun-Ju Kim, 1997; Hae-Dong Kim, 2005). However, as Jin-Hwang Choi and Yoon Lee (2004) stated, needs analyses have not been actively conducted on elementary school students and middle school students recently.

The current study performed a needs analysis on elementary and middle school students' English writing for the betterment of an English writing camp program. Various sources of information were triangulated: a students' survey on their level of English writing, problems, preferred method, needs on English writing, and attitudes; a diagnostic English writing test; and a teachers' survey to examine their opinions about the existing program.

2. English Writing Standards of the 7th National Curriculum of Korea

In the 7th National Curriculum of Korea, English writing starts from the 5th grade, two years after English listening and speaking are introduced as a school subject to students. The content standards of English writing develop in a spiral way, with two major axes: skills and themes. Writing skills are introduced and expanded from the smallest unit of writing, such as the alphabet and simple words, to an essay or story writing. In themes of writing, students first learn to write about the most immediate or hands-on topics, such as oneself, family, school, or daily life. The themes are later expanded to include familiar general issues, less familiar general issues, and lastly, various other themes.

III. METHODS

1. Participants

The participants were 94 students (42 boys and 52 girls) who enrolled in Y’s one-week Writing Camp. They ranged from 6th through 9th graders and came from all over the country. Table 1 and Table 2 summarize the participants by their grades and hometown.

TABLE 1
Distribution of the Participants by Grades

	6 th graders	7 th graders	8 th graders	9 th graders	Total
n	22	36	26	10	94
%	23.4	38.3	27.7	10.6	100.0

TABLE 2
Distribution of the Participants by their Hometown

	GW	GG	GN	GB	JN	SI	JB	CN	CB	Total
n	3	13	16	9	6	15	11	10	11	94
%	3.2	13.8	17	9.6	6.4	16.0	11.7	10.6	11.7	100.0

(GW: Gangwon, GG: Gyeonggi, GN: Gyeongnam, Busan, Ulsan, GB: Gyeongbuk, Daegu, JN: Jeonnam, Gwangju, SI: Seoul/Incheon, JB: Jeonbuk, CN: Chungnam/Daejeon, CB: Chungbuk)

2. English Writing Proficiency Test

Under the 7th National Curriculum of Korea, students are to learn English writing from the 5th grade in elementary school. However, in Korea it is hard to neglect the impact of private instruction on English learning, which makes it difficult to assume students’ level of English, since a gap exists between those who receive private instruction and those who do not (Hyun-Sook Chung, 2004, 2005). Although Korean National Assessment of

Educational Achievement is annually administered to 6th, 9th, and 10th graders on five subjects—Korean, social studies, math, science and English, the English test has limitations in that about 80% of the test consists of multiple-choice items and the remaining performance-based items also cover only word-level writing for the most part. As there have been few tests administered to evaluate elementary and middle school students' English writing ability directly with performance assessment tools, it is even harder to understand their English writing ability.

To analyze the participants' level of English writing, a writing proficiency test was developed on the basis of the 7th national curriculum. The test consisted of questions at the levels of grade 5 through 10. All the questions were adopted or adapted from the exemplary test items developed by the Korea Institute of Curriculum and Evaluation (Chanbin Imm & Yak-Woo Park, 2000; Chanbin Imm, Sukhee Lee, & Koohyang Jeong, 2001). English writing standards to be covered in the writing test were selected mainly based on the developmental skills of writing: writing alphabet, a word, a sentence, a paragraph, etc. The writing standards covered in the test are described in Table 3.

TABLE 3
English Writing Standards Covered in the Writing Proficiency Test

Grade	Standards
5	Writes a word to match a picture/object.
6	Writes the capital and lower case letters legibly and uses punctuation marks appropriately. Writes phrases and sentences.
7	Answers questions about self. Summarizes a simple story in a couple of sentences after reading it.
8	Completes a sentence using given words. Writes a paragraph introducing own family.
9	Writes a simple story about a general issue.
10	Writes logically about thoughts on a general issue.

Evaluation criteria were adapted from studies by Chanbin Imm et al. (2000, 2001) and Gill-Jeong Chung and Chan-Kyoo Min (2001). To summarize the evaluation criteria, the questions for writing simple words or sentences, i.e. the level of grades 5 through 7, "task fulfillment," was used as a criterion. Whereas, for the questions which require students to write sentences or a paragraph, i.e. grade 8 or 9 level, both "content¹" and "accuracy²" were used. Moreover, as the criteria for the grade 10 level, "coherence (logic)" and "fluency³," were adopted (Chung, Gill-Jeong et al., 2001). The general scoring guidelines are shown in Table 4.

¹ how appropriately and clearly the content is delivered

² accuracy in grammar, use of words or expressions, and mechanics

³ the length of intelligible writing

TABLE 4
General Scoring Guidelines (Chanbin Imm et al., 2000)

High Level	Middle Level	Low Level
- When a student exceeds basic learning objectives	- When a student meets basic learning objectives	- When a student does not meet basic learning objectives
- When a student acquires advanced content or knowledge and has an implicit or implicative understanding	- When a student acquires basic content or knowledge and has an explicit understanding	- When a student has difficulty in understanding basic content or knowledge
- When a student has a deep understanding of concepts and facts included in the standards	- When a student has a basic understanding of concept and facts	- When a student does not catch the key information or misunderstands a concept
- When errors in accuracy, fluency, and appropriateness hardly hinder communication	- When a student's errors in accuracy, fluency, and appropriateness sometimes hinder basic communication	- When there are so many errors in accuracy, fluency, and appropriateness that they hinder basic communication
- When a student performs a major skill or procedure included in the knowledge automatically	- When a student performs a major skill or procedure included in the knowledge without major mistakes, but not automatically	- When a student performs a major skill or procedure included in the knowledge, but with major mistakes

Students' writings were evaluated by two trained judges based on these scoring guidelines. Most of the time, the scores given by the judges corresponded. When there was a discrepancy, they discussed the score in comparison with the scoring guidelines and reached an agreement.

3. Survey Questionnaire

There were two types of survey questionnaire: one for the camp students and the other for the teachers. The students' survey questionnaire was developed to investigate participants' current situation of studying English and English writing, their perception of English writing, and needs within English writing (see Appendix).

TABLE 5
The Structure of the Questionnaire for the Students

Category	Items	Question No.
Current Situation	The amount of time invested in studying English, English writing Writing activities that the participants have participated in	2-1, 2-12, 2-13, 2-14, 2-15
Problems	Difficult elements of writing in English/Korean	1-4, 2-11
Priorities	Important elements of writing in English/Korean Important/Interesting areas of language learning	1-3, 2-10 2-2, 2-3, 2-15
Abilities	Perceived abilities in English and English writing	2-4, 2-5, 2-9
Attitudes	Attitude toward writing in English	2-6, 2-7, 2-8
Solutions	Useful/interesting writing activities	2-15

The structure of the questionnaire was designed on the basis of Rossett's (1982, cited in Brown, 1995) five categories of questions: problems, priorities, abilities, attitudes, and solutions. Table 5 presents the structure of the questionnaire with the five categories of questions, with the additional category of "current situation." The survey questionnaire for the camp teachers included items on their personal and professional backgrounds and their opinions of the existing writing camp.

4. English Writing Camp Program

Y's writing camp is an annually-held one-week camp program for 5th through 9th graders. The everyday camp program consists of a writing class on process writing instructions, English immersion activities based on a language experience program, and evening activities such as spelling bee contests, pictorial contests, Olympic games, etc. The main focus of the program is on the writing instruction, in which students learn the process and stages of writing, from the beginning to end, and writing strategies for each stage i.e. making a graphic organizer, clusters, and a storyboard. While learning each stage and strategies of writing, students participate in their own writing activity and, in the end, complete their story and give a presentation in front of the class with the help of the teachers.

IV. RESULTS

1. Results of the Writing Test

Table 6 shows the mean scores of the questions for the level of each grade in the test. Refer to Table 3 to see English writing achievement standards of each grade. As shown in the table, the mean scores decrease, as the grades increase, suggesting that the degree of difficulty of the test seems to have been generally controlled.

TABLE 6
Descriptive Statistics for the Mean Scores

The Level of Questions	N	Mean	S. D
Grade 5	94	1.96	.20
Grade 6	94	1.59	.48
Grade 7	94	1.48	.53
Grade 8	94	1.35	.49
Grade 9	94	1.03	.60
Grade 10	94	.64	.66

To further examine the reliability of the test, Cronbach alpha value was calculated and the results on the twelve test items was .85, by which the test can be safely called reliable,

as the value over .7 is considered to be reliable (Nunnally, 1967 cited in Jeong-ryeol Kim & Jiyeo Yoon, 2004).

To estimate students’ writing level by grade, students’ mean scores of each grade level questions were calculated. Students could receive one of three scores for each grade level question item: 0, 1, or 2 for low, middle, and high level (see Table 4), respectively. A mean score was made from the scores for all of the question items of the same grade level. Students with a mean score over 1 (the mid-point of the three possible scores) were deemed to have the writing ability of the corresponding grade (Imm & Park, 2000). Students’ writing grade levels corresponded to the highest grade level in which their mean score was at least 1.⁴

TABLE 7
The Grade Level of English Writing

		Writing Grade Level						Total
		G5	G6	G7	G8	G9	G10	
Students’ Grade	6	1	4	0	3	2	11	21
	7	0	0	2	7	11	14	34
	8	2	0	0	4	9	9	24
	9	0	0	1	0	6	3	10
Total		3 (3.4%)	4 (4.5%)	3 (3.4%)	14 (15.7%)	28 (31.5%)	37 (41.6%)	89 (100%)

As shown in Table 7, the majority of the students were able to write a simple story or thoughts about a general issue fluently and quite coherently, the level being equivalent to the writing skill of grade 10. About 90% of the students were evaluated to have writing ability of grade 8 to 10 level. Table 7 also shows that within one grade there is a discrepancy in grade level of English writing. Considering writing standards of each grade (see TABLE 3), it signifies a noticeable gap in English writing proficiency among the participants of the same grade. To examine how many students accomplished their own grade writing standards, the relative writing level was calculated in Table 8.

TABLE 8
The Relative Writing Level (Achieved Writing Grade Level - Grade)

WGL-G	-3	-2	-1	0	1	2	3	4	Total
n	2	1	1	16	19	23	16	11	89
%	2.2	1.1	1.1	18.0	21.4	25.8	18.0	12.4	100

⁴ After scrutinizing the raw data of all the students’ mean scores, there were only 5 cases, in which the former grade mean score did not surpass point 1, when the latter grade mean score did. Those cases were excluded in the analysis. Among them, two cases were when the students received extremely low scores on the question of punctuation marks (grade 6 level), whose total mean score is also relatively low and other two cases were regarding scoring guided writing (a question of the grade 8 level), in which it is hard to distinguish those who copied the example writing from those who wrote by themselves.

As shown in Table 8, almost 80% of the participants exceeded the writing standards of their own grade. Especially, one third of them are considered to have writing skills of more than three grades higher than their own grade. However, 4 percent of the participants were evaluated not to have the minimum corresponding writing skills of their own grade.

2. Results of the Survey

1) Students' Survey Questionnaire

(1) Current Situation of English Writing

To investigate the participants' current situation of English study and English writing, three questions dealt with the amount of time invested in their study. The time spent on studying English after school was analyzed to be 8.5 hours a week. However, it was notable that the standard deviation was 5.65 hours, implying there is a substantial divergence among the students. They also answered that at school about two hours are devoted to English writing a week, plus, they study English writing almost 3 hours each week outside of school. In total, the average hours they study English writing are about 5 hours a week. The next question was to identify in what kind of writing activities the students have participated. The results are shown in Table 9.

TABLE 9
Q. Choose all the English Writing Activities in Which You Have Participated

	Items	n	% of responses	% of cases	Rank
WP	Learning writing process or strategies	59	9.9	62.1	9
WD	Writing a diary	75	12.6	78.9	2
IS	Introducing self or family	70	11.7	73.7	3
EW	E-pal/pen pal writing	60	10.1	63.2	8
WS	Writing about daily/school life	63	10.6	66.3	6
CW	Writing about what happened or creative writing	66	11.1	69.5	4
MC	Writing a memo/card	77	12.9	81.1	1
WT	Writing thoughts on a general topic	62	10.4	65.3	7
WF	Writing thoughts or feelings on a book, music, movie, etc.	64	10.7	67.4	5
Etc.	Etc.	1	0.2	1.1	
	Total	597	100.0	628.4	

Table 9 shows that writing a memo/card and writing a diary were selected as the most common activities. The third most common writing activity was writing an introduction of self or family. Learning writing process or strategies, E-pal/pen pal writing, and writing thoughts on a general topic were chosen relatively as less common activities.

(2) Comparisons of Writing in Korean and in English

To investigate the camp students’ general attitude and difficulty in writing, two categories of questions were designed on both Korean and English writing: one on general writing preference and degree of perceived difficulty in writing, and the other on the elements of writing. There were four questions regarding preference and perceived difficulty of writing in Korean and English. Table 10 presents descriptive statistics for responses to a 6-point Likert scale (1: strongly disagree, 6: strongly agree) survey.

TABLE 10
Descriptive Statistics for Writing Preference and Perceived Difficulty in Korean and in English

	Survey Items	Mean	SD	N
KW Preference	I like writing in Korean.	4.15	1.345	94
Difficulty K	It is difficult to write in Korean.	2.16	1.214	94
EW Preference	I like writing in English.	3.20	1.247	94
Difficulty E	It is difficult to write in English.	3.56	1.223	94

The results show that the participants like writing, especially in Korean and they feel that Korean writing is not difficult, while English writing is moderately difficult. To further investigate if there is any relationship between Korean and English writing in preference and perceived difficulty, Pearson Correlation Coefficients were analyzed. The results are shown in Table 11.

TABLE 11
Correlations between Preference and Perceived Difficulty in Korean and in English

	KW Preference	Difficulty K	EW Preference	Difficulty E
KW Preference	1	-.399**	.200	-.125
Difficulty K		1	-.162	.357**
EW Preference			1	-.488**
Difficulty E				1

** Correlation is significant at the .01 level (2-tailed).

Table 11 indicates that preference and difficulty are negatively correlated in both Korean (-.399) and English (-.488), suggesting that students who like writing in Korean or English perceive less difficulties in writing in the language. Moreover, it should be noted that the correlation between preference and difficulty is found higher in English than in Korean. As to the relationship between the languages, there is no significant correlation observed in preference, which implies students who like writing in Korean do not necessarily like writing in English. However, in perceived difficulty of writing, there is a significant correlation between Korean and English (.357), indicating that students who perceive difficulty in Korean writing also tend to perceive difficulty in English writing. Along with

the questions on preference and difficulty in writing, students were asked about the elements of writing by importance and difficulty in each language. Each question and descriptive statistics of the responses are shown in Table 12.

TABLE 12
Q: Which Do You Think are the Two Most Important Elements in Writing?

	In Korean writing				In English writing			
	n	% of responses	% of cases	Rank	n	% of responses	% of cases	Rank
Understanding of the writing process	44	23.8	46.8	2	27	14.4	28.7	4
Finding what to write about	26	14.1	27.7	4	14	7.5	14.9	5
Finding right words or expressions	23	12.4	24.5	5	47	25.1	50.0	2
Writing grammatically	31	16.8	33.0	3	63	33.7	67.0	1
Organizing ideas	58	31.4	61.7	1	35	18.7	37.2	3
Etc.	3	1.6	3.2	6	1	.5	1.1	6
Total	185	100.0	196.8		187	100.0	198.9	

Table 12 shows important elements of writing in each language chosen by the subjects. In Korean writing, macroskills (Brown, 2004) were ranked higher than microskills; organizing ideas was ranked as the most important, selected by 61.7% of participants and understanding of the writing process was the second most important, chosen by 46.8%. Meanwhile, in English writing microskills were prioritized; 67% of the subjects answered that writing grammatically was most important and that finding right words or expressions the second most important (50%). The difference in the results of the two languages seems to have been caused by their level of English proficiency, which is also reflected in the findings of the questions on the difficult elements in writing in Table 13.

The responses on the question of difficult parts in writing of Table 13 mostly overlap the results in Table 12. In Korean writing, organizing ideas was chosen as the most difficult, while in English, microskills—writing grammatically and finding right words or expressions—were first and second most difficult. However, it is interesting to find that in Korean writing, finding what to write about took the second place in difficulty and in English writing, though there was little change in the rank between the responses of the two questions, more students (11% - 15%) agreed that writing grammatically and finding right words or expressions were difficult, suggesting those are the most immediate problems perceived by the subjects in English writing.

TABLE 13
Q: Which Are the Two Most Difficult Elements of Writing for You?

	In Korean writing				In English writing			
	n	% of responses	% of cases	Rank	n	% of responses	% of cases	Rank
Understanding of the writing process	32	17.2	33.7	4	7	3.7	7.4	5
Finding what to write about	39	21.0	41.1	2	18	9.5	19.1	4
Finding right words or expressions	35	18.8	36.8	3	61	32.3	64.9	2
Writing grammatically	32	17.2	33.7	4	74	39.2	78.7	1
Organizing ideas	41	22.0	43.2	1	27	14.3	28.7	3
Etc.	7	3.8	7.4	6	2	1.1	2.1	6
Total	186	100.0	195.8		189	100.0	201.1	

(3) Perception and Self-evaluation of English Writing and Preferred Writing Activities

This part of the survey was to explore 1) students’ perception of general English study and English writing, 2) their self-evaluation of English proficiency and writing ability, and 3) preferred English writing activities. First of all, to investigate the perception of writing in English language learning, two questions on importance and interest were asked and the outcomes are shown in Table 14 and Table 15.

TABLE 14
Q: Rank Each Area of Language According to Importance in English Learning. (N=94, %)

Rank	Listening	Speaking	Reading	Writing	Grammar	Vocabulary	Pronunciation
1	28.4	30.5	5.3	7.4	14.7	13.7	2.1
2	17.9	28.4	12.6	9.5	10.5	10.5	8.4
3	18.9	16.8	20.0	15.8	9.5	6.3	12.6
4	11.6	10.5	16.8	18.9	10.5	7.4	14.7
5	6.3	8.4	15.8	17.9	16.8	12.6	14.7
6	8.4	2.1	15.8	14.7	21.1	16.8	11.6
7	4.2	1.1	7.4	10.5	11.6	26.3	29.5
0	4.2	2.1	6.3	5.3	5.3	6.3	6.3
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

The findings of Table 14 and Table 15 reveal that the participants prioritized speaking and listening highest in terms of importance, and that they liked speaking and reading the most, leaving writing as least interesting and important among the four language skills. It is also notable that although pronunciation was selected as the least important element in language learning, students showed much interest in pronunciation.

TABLE 15**Q: Rank Each Area of Language According to Your Interest in English Learning. (N=94, %)**

Rank	Listening	Speaking	Reading	Writing	Grammar	Vocabulary	Pronun- ciation
1	23.2	29.5	24.2	3.2	3.2	5.3	12.6
2	18.9	18.9	31.6	6.3	4.2	2.1	16.8
3	14.7	25.3	21.1	14.7	5.3	3.2	14.7
4	18.9	10.5	7.4	17.9	11.6	16.8	13.7
5	6.3	7.4	8.4	21.1	9.5	24.2	15.8
6	7.4	2.1	3.2	16.8	26.3	26.3	12.6
7	8.4	5.3	2.1	15.8	34.7	16.8	10.5
0	2.1	1.1	2.2	4.3	5.3	5.3	3.2
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

To further examine participants' perceptions of their English proficiency and English writing, and their attitudes toward English writing, the following 6-point Likert scale self-ratings were used. As Table 16 shows, the participants think they have sufficient basic oral and written communication skills in English and moderate inclination for English writing. They demonstrated strong needs on English writing, by agreeing on the necessity of English writing practice to improve English proficiency. Also, on the question of asking if the time spent on English writing at school is sufficient, the majority of them answered that it is not sufficient and they would like to learn writing in English.

TABLE 16**Descriptive Statistics for Perception of English Writing (1: strongly disagree, 6: strongly agree)**

No.	Items	N	Mean	SD
2-4	I have basic verbal communication skills in English.	93	4.15	1.05
2-5	I have basic English writing skills (cards, letters, diary, etc.).	93	3.96	1.11
2-6	I like writing in English.	93	3.20	1.25
2-7	To improve English proficiency, it is necessary to practice writing in English.	93	4.99	1.15
2-8	I would like to learn English writing.	93	4.58	1.35
2-9	It is difficult to write in English.	93	3.54	1.20
2-13	The amount of time spent on English writing at school is sufficient.	93	2.42	1.36

Lastly, followed by the question of writing activities in which the students have participated (see Table 9), there was another question asking the students to rank the writing activities they had participated in according to usefulness and interest.

TABLE 17
Q. Rank the Activities⁵ You Have Participated in According to Usefulness and Interest.

Rank	WP	WD	IS	EW	WS	CW	MC	WT	WF
1	21.31	22.37	12.33	27.42	10.77	26.47	16.67	10.77	10.77
2	8.20	18.42	9.59	20.97	13.85	11.76	17.95	24.62	10.77
3	9.84	13.16	16.44	11.29	12.31	16.18	17.95	12.31	18.46
4	8.20	9.21	13.70	9.68	13.85	13.24	12.82	12.31	20.00
5	16.39	11.84	20.55	8.06	13.85	4.41	14.10	9.23	9.23
6	11.48	3.95	12.33	4.84	13.85	13.24	11.54	7.69	9.23
7	11.48	11.84	9.59	6.45	9.23	2.94	5.13	10.77	6.15
8	4.92	6.58	4.11	3.23	9.23	5.88	1.28	6.15	10.77
9	8.20	2.63	1.37	8.06	3.08	5.88	2.56	6.15	4.62
Total	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00

Table 17 shows E-pal/pen pal writing (EW) and writing what happened or creative writing (CW) were chosen as the two most useful and interesting activities. In addition, writing a diary (WD), learning writing process or strategies (WP), and writing thoughts on a general topic (WT) were also selected as considerably useful and interesting activities. On the contrary, two of the three most common activities—writing a memo/card (MC) and introducing self and family (IS)—proved to be not so useful or interesting for the participants. Based on the findings, it can be concluded that the students seem to enjoy the writing activities which are practical, more authentic, and which enable them to express their ideas with creativity.

2) Teachers’ Survey Questionnaire

The survey questionnaire for the camp teachers covered their personal and professional backgrounds and opinions of the existing writing camp. Ten native English speaking teachers (5 males and 5 females) answered the teachers’ survey. The majority of them had more than 2 years of experience in teaching EFL or ESL and 30% of them had taught English for more than 5 years. The teachers were either professors/MA holders, or school teachers in the United States.

After the one-week English writing camp, most of the teachers mentioned that they observed marked improvement in the students’ writing achievement, self-confidence, and apprehension in English. Especially, the teachers were sure that most students mastered the core of the curriculum—the concepts of graphic organizers and the overall writing process from beginning to end, and the important stages of it. The following excerpts represent the teachers’ comments.

⁵ WP: Learning writing process or strategies, WD: Writing a diary, IS: Introducing self or family, EW: E-pal/pen pal writing, WS: Writing about daily/school life, CW: Writing about what happened or creative writing, MC: Writing a memo/card, WT: Writing thoughts on a general topic, WF: Writing thoughts or feelings on a book, music, movie, etc.

... on the first day, students wrote one paragraph. We compared their first paragraphs with their final drafts and they had improved significantly. They added lots of detail and improved their stories...

... the ability to give a full description, in a story, of characters, settings etc. was that seemed developed...

... there was great improvement in the students' writing achievement. From the first draft to the final draft I noticed considerable progression. One student in particular noticeably came out of his shell and wrote a terrific story...

As to the question of successful or recommended writing activities, the majority of the teachers answered that the introduction of each stage of writing process, especially various prewriting activities and graphic organizer were very useful and successful. There was also a suggestion to write emails to some students who were not very keen on writing in class, pointing out that it encouraged them to write in English.

To improve the camp, the teachers suggested reducing the number of relatively less important activities so that students will be able to concentrate better on their writing itself. They also recommend including more activities for language practice so that students can utilize them in their writing. Moreover, some of the teachers maintained that it would be ideal to group the students based on English proficiency or experience with the language rather than age grading.

3. Relationship between English Writing Level and Learner Factors

1) Analysis of the Self-ratings Questionnaire

Before analyzing the relationship between survey and test results, factor analysis was conducted on the 6-point Likert scale questions in order to analyze the validity of the questionnaire used in the study.

TABLE 18
Factor Loading of the 6-point Likert Scale Questionnaire

Items	Factors	
	1	2
2-4 I have basic verbal communication skills in English.	.818	.126
2-5 I have basic English writing skills (cards, letters, diary, etc.).	.817	.280
2-9 It is difficult to write in English.	-.778	.023
2-7 To improve English proficiency, it is necessary to practice writing in English.	-.014	.862
2-8 I would like to learn English writing.	.150	.816
2-6 I like writing in English.	.563	.689

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis; bold = the highest loading for each variable

As shown in Table 18, the survey items can be divided into two groups, 2-4, 2-5, and 2-9 as one and 2-7, 2-8, and 2-6 as the other. Each group formed a variable by addition of the score of the survey question items under the label of “confidence,” and “attitude (toward English writing),” respectively.

2) Differences in Learner Factors According to the English Writing Proficiency Level

In labeling individual students’ English writing proficiency, one of the methods used in the current study was calculating relative writing grade level by subtracting the students’ grade from the students’ writing grade level (see Table 8). In order to analyze the differences in learner factors according to the English writing proficiency level, the participants were divided into three groups in accordance with the relative writing grade level. Thus, participants who received 3~4 points—whose English writing level was 3 or 4 grades higher than their original grade—were labeled Level A group; those who had 1~2 points—whose level was 1 or 2 grades higher—were labeled Level B group; and lastly, those who received -3~0 points—whose writing level is the same or lower than their grades—were labeled Level C group. To examine any significant differences among those three groups in five independent variables, MANOVA was conducted. The five variables were extra hours of studying English, total hours of English writing, extra hours of English writing, confidence, and attitude towards English writing. Means and standard deviations of the variables are presented in Table 19.

TABLE 19
Means and Standard Deviations of the Five Learner Variables

Items	A (N=26)	B (N=43)	C (N=20)
Extra hours of studying English	11.22 (6.82)	9.00 (4.71)	3.80 (2.98)
Total hours of English writing	5.54 (5.43)	5.31 (4.29)	3.89 (4.02)
Extra hours of English writing	3.67 (4.05)	2.88 (2.64)	1.85 (1.73)
Confidence	13.00 (2.50)	11.72 (2.27)	9.65 (3.15)
Attitude	13.58 (3.24)	12.67 (3.14)	12.05 (3.02)

As shown in Table 19, in general, higher level of English writing proficiency groups spent more hours in English study, English writing, and extra English writing outside class, and presented higher marks in confidence and attitude. Especially, the difference in the extra hours of studying English among three groups is conspicuous; Level A is over 11 hours a week, and Level B is 9 hours, whereas Level C shows less than 4 hours a week.

The MANOVA results (Table 20) show that the three groups were significantly different in two variables: extra hours of studying English and confidence.

TABLE 20
Tests of Between-Subjects Effects

Source	Dependent Variable	SS	df	MS	F	Sig.
Level	Extra hours of studying English	644.763	2	322.382	12.246	.000
	Total hours of English writing	36.199	2	18.100	.857	.428
	Extra hours of English writing	37.468	2	18.734	2.121	.126
	Confidence	127.563	2	63.781	9.774	.000
	Attitude	27.622	2	13.811	1.399	.252

To further analyze between which groups there was a significant difference, Post Hoc comparisons were conducted using LSD test and the results are summarized in Table 21. It shows that between Level A and C, Level B and C, there are significant differences in extra hours of studying English. In addition, there are significant differences among all the groups in confidence. That is, participants in Level A and B study English for significantly longer hours than Level C and the participants of Level A have significantly higher confidence than those of Level B and C; moreover, Level B students also have significantly higher confidence than Level C students do. Thus, all three groups demonstrated different degrees of confidence according to their English writing level.

TABLE 21
Pairwise Comparison for the Differences among Levels in Learner Variables

DV	(I) Level	(J) Level	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.
Extra hours of studying English	A	B	2.2192	1.27464	.085
	A	C	7.4192(*)	1.52602	.000
	B	C	5.2000(*)	1.38869	.000
Confidence	A	B	1.28(*)	.635	.047
	A	C	3.35(*)	.760	.000
	B	C	2.07(*)	.691	.004

*The mean difference is significant at the .05 level.

3) Predictor Variables of English Writing Proficiency

With the goal of examining predictor variables of English writing proficiency, stepwise multiple regressions were performed on two different scores; 1) each students' total score of writing test, and 2) each students' extra or deficient writing score in comparison with their own grade, which is the degree that one exceeded or could not reach one's own grade standards. First, on each students' total score of the test, a stepwise multiple regression was conducted with eight independent variables: grade, gender, confidence, attitude, extra hours of studying English, hours of English writing at school, extra hours of English writing, and total hours of English writing.

TABLE 22
Stepwise Regression Analysis of Total Score of Writing Test

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	F	Sig.
1	.436(a)	.190	.181	4.251	20.425	.000(a)
2	.493(b)	.243	.226	4.133	13.823	.000(b)
3	.550(c)	.302	.278	3.992	12.278	.000(c)
4	.596(d)	.355	.325	3.860	11.572	.000(d)

Note: a) Predictors: (Constant), extra hours of studying English
b) Predictors: (Constant), extra hours of studying English, grade
c) Predictors: (Constant), extra hours of studying English, grade, confidence
d) Predictors: (Constant), extra hours of studying English, grade, confidence, total hours of English writing

Table 22 presents four variables: the extra hours of studying English, grade, confidence, and total hours of English writing, which accounted for as much as 32.5% of the students’ score of writing test. It is notable that among those variables extra hours of studying English alone seems to explain about 20% of the students’ total score of writing test. Grade and confidence in English and English writing were also important factors to predict English writing proficiency.

Another question remained regarding English writing proficiency: What kind of factors can predict students whose English writing ability surpass or cannot reach writing standards of their own grade? In order to answer the question, extra or deficient score was calculated by comparing the students’ score and the corresponding grade score. And a stepwise multiple regression was conducted with seven⁶ independent variables: gender, confidence, attitude, extra hours of studying English, hours of English writing at school, extra hours of English writing, and total hours of English writing.

TABLE 23
Stepwise Regression Analysis of Extra Score of Writing Test

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	F	Sig.
1	.496(a)	.246	.237	3.854	28.313	.000(a)
2	.557(b)	.310	.294	3.707	19.317	.000(b)

Note: a) Predictors: (Constant), extra hours of studying English
b) Predictors: (Constant), extra hours of studying English, confidence

As shown in Table 23, as to the question of extra score of the writing test, two variables—extra hours of studying English and confidence—accounted for about 30%. Thus, the extra scores acquired on the questions with higher writing standards than one’s own grade can be predicted by the amount of time spent on studying English and confidence in English and English writing. And it is quite amazing to see that the extra

⁶ Grade was not included in the variables as the extra score was calculated based on the grade.

hours of studying English can explain almost a quarter of the writing proficiency.

V. CONCLUSION

The current study performed a needs analysis on 6th through 9th graders' English writing for the betterment of an English writing camp program, covering objective and subjective needs. For the students' objective needs, with the goal of examining their English writing ability, an English writing proficiency test was developed and administered. In addition, the current situations of studying English and English writing, such as the amount of time invested in English writing, and the writing activities participants had undertaken were investigated. To analyze subjective needs, information on their attitudes toward English writing and perception of their ability, priorities on writing elements in importance and difficulty, and information on their preferred writing activities were collected and analyzed. The following are the summary of the major findings.

First of all, the majority of the participants were able to write a simple story or thoughts about a general issue fluently and quite coherently, the level being equivalent to the writing skill of grade 9 and 10. Furthermore, about 80% of them exceeded the writing standards of their own grade and, especially, one third of the students were evaluated to have writing ability more than three grades higher than their own grade. There was a noticeable divergence of writing ability within the same grade.

Secondly, the results of the needs analysis survey indicated that even though the students exhibited an inclination toward English writing, they labeled writing as the least important or interesting among the four language skills and chose writing grammatically and finding right words or expressions as the most difficult and important elements in English writing. The most common writing activity they had participated in was writing a memo/card. However, they preferred more authentic and creative writing activities, such as E-pal/pen pal writing, writing about what happened or creative writing. The results of the teachers' survey showed that the writing camp curriculum and activities were generally successful and the teachers observed marked improvement in the students' writing achievement. To further improve the camp, they suggested reducing the number of activities and grouping students according to their English writing proficiency.

Lastly, the relationship between the students' level of English writing and various learner factors revealed that students whose writing level surpass their own grade level were spending significantly more hours in studying English, and that the students had different level of confidence according to their writing proficiency level. In addition, students' current writing ability was able to be predicted by extra hours of studying English, grade, confidence, and the total hours of English writing at school and after school, whereas predictor variables for their relative level of writing ability in comparison with their grade were the hours of studying English after school and confidence in English.

Especially, the results of the regression reaffirmed the importance of the amount of time invested in studying English on English writing ability, showing that the time explained 20-25% of the of the writing test scores.

From these findings, some implications can be drawn. Above all, it is essential to acknowledge the importance of writing. English writing has not received enough attention partly because it is not included in the College Scholastic Ability Test of Korea. However, students need to know that writing is a very powerful tool to express one's ideas and opinions. More systematic and practical writing education as the fundamentals of academic and technical writing would be motivating for students. Next, it is important to create a comfortable atmosphere in which students feel less stress and anxiety in accuracy of grammar or vocabulary, especially in the beginning stage, so that they do not get too intimidated by making mistakes. Moreover, it would also be very useful and helpful to provide more activities for language practice so that students can utilize the language in their writing as some teachers recommended. However, it should be also noted that students enjoy the writing activities which are practical and authentic, and which enable them to express their ideas with creativity. Finally, although experienced teachers were able to manage teaching students with different English writing levels, it would be ideal to place students according to their writing ability rather than their grade.

As the current study was to improve the English writing camp program, there is more important work left, which is to apply the results of the analysis to the curriculum. These findings of the analysis will be applicable to many stages, such as deciding on students' placement, writing activities, and teaching writing strategies.

The current study also revealed areas which merit further study. In the process of designing and administrating the writing test based on the 7th National Curriculum of Korea, several problems were found. Some of the biggest problems were caused by the ambiguity in the description of content standards and evaluation criteria, and the lack of consistency in difficulty within the exemplary test items across standards for different grades. Thus, the development of a comprehensive English writing test and more specific and concrete content standards and evaluation criteria is needed for Korean elementary/middle/high school students.

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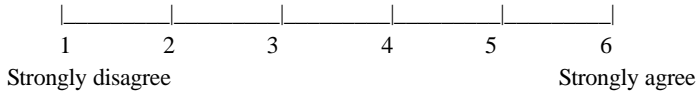
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3. Rank each area of language according to your interest in English learning.

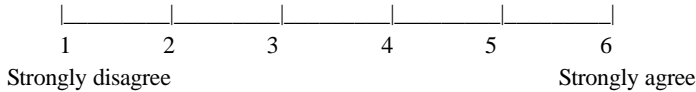
Listening() Speaking() Reading() Writing() Grammar()
Vocabulary() Pronunciation()

(4~9) Circle one number among 6, which well represents your thoughts.

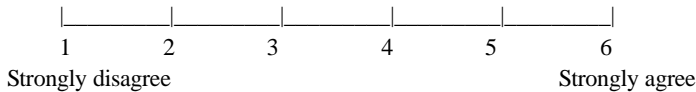
4. I have basic verbal communication skills in English.



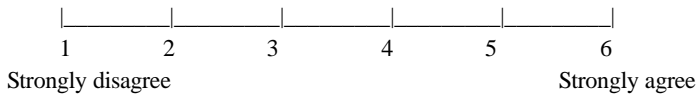
5. I have basic English writing skills in English (cards, letters, diary, etc.).



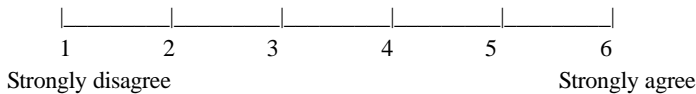
6. I like writing in English.



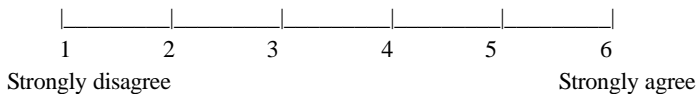
7. To improve English proficiency, it is necessary to practice writing in English.



8. I would like to learn English writing.



9. It is difficult to write in English.



10. Which do you think are the two most important elements in English writing?

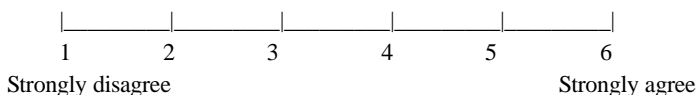
- 1) Understanding of the writing process
- 2) Finding what to write about
- 3) Finding right words or expressions
- 4) Writing grammatically
- 5) Organizing ideas
- 6) Etc. ()

11. Which are the two most difficult elements in English writing for you?

- 1) Understanding of the writing process
- 2) Finding what to write about
- 3) Finding right words or expressions
- 4) Writing grammatically
- 5) Organizing ideas
- 6) Etc. ()

12. How many hours a week do you study English writing at school? (hours)

13. The amount of time spent on English writing at school is sufficient. Circle one number among 6, which well represents your thoughts.



14. How many hours a week do you study English writing after school? (hours)
15. Circle all the English writing activities in which you have participated. Then, rank the activities you have participated in according to usefulness and interest in the blank.
- 1) Learning writing process or strategies ()
 - 2) Writing a diary ()
 - 3) Introducing self or family ()
 - 4) E-pal/pen pal writing ()
 - 5) Writing about daily/school life ()
 - 6) Writing about what happened or creative writing ()
 - 7) Writing a memo/card ()
 - 8) Writing thoughts on a general topic ()
 - 9) Writing thoughts or feelings on a book, music, movie, etc. ()
 - 10) Etc. ()

Applicable levels: Elementary/Secondary

Key words: needs analysis, writing assessment

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Received in May, 2006

Reviewed in June, 2006

Revised version received in August, 2006